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## Reviews

*THE CURRICULUM.* By FRANKLIN BOBBITT. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1918. VIII+295 pp. \$1.50.

As the reviewer is guilty of a sin of omission, he wishes to add a brief criticism of the above book to his 'Literature of Modern Language Methodology in America for 1918.' The fourth conclusion to this article, cf. *M. L. J.*, vol. IV, no. 2, p. 86, reads: "Strange to say, outsiders—which means non-Modern Language people—are represented by 25 men and women. This might be considered an auspicious omen, but it is in truth a dangerous indication as several of them are psychologists and educators who seem to question the validity of our subject and its present prominent place in the scholastic curricula. We must clearly enunciate our claims and prove them."

We have now to add as the twenty-sixth member of that category Mr. Bobbitt, who is Professor of Educational Administration in the University of Chicago. Cf. *M. L. J.*, II: i, p. 40.

'*The Curriculum*' contains a short Preface and six Parts as also an Index of three pages. Parts I to V need not be discussed here as they fall distinctly into the field of general education. The titles indicate fairly well the nature of their contents: Ends and processes; Training for occupational efficiency; Education for citizenship; Education for physical efficiency; Education for leisure occupations. Part VI, however, on Education for social intercommunication, pp. 247-289, is of direct concern to us. The first chapter on The Mother-Tongue, XIX, pp. 247-254, again interests most of all the teacher of English. Hence we shall confine our remarks to chapters XX and XXI, on the Training in Foreign Languages, pp. 255-281, and on Some Concluding Considerations, pp. 282-289.

Chapter XX has six subdivisions. We are told that foreign languages are scarcely needed for occupational efficiency. Bobbitt says that the foreign language method is highly expensive in time and money (p. 260), and considers the teaching of foreign languages justified for strictly professional purposes for perhaps one in a thousand. The author holds 'that men and women of all ranks and classes should read, but it is obvious that for effectiveness and economy the reading should be in the mother-tongue. Unless specifically situated, therefore, there seems to be no occupational reason for foreign languages for the millions of

workers below the professional ranks,' p. 261. We grant Mr. Bobbitt, with reservations, the correctness of the last statement, but we take decided issue with him on his thesis as to the value of foreign languages for strictly professional purposes. An inquiry among progressive physicians, surgeons, chemists, engineers, etc., would undoubtedly reveal the onesidedness of the author's judgment.

That foreign languages are not needed for civic activities is the second argument of the writer. He considers the mother-tongue sufficient, i. e., the reading of the history and of the literature of nations in good English translations. But are the foreign histories and their literatures easily accessible in good English translations?

We need not dwell upon the third item as to the need of foreign languages for family life. No one has seriously offered an argument of that sort as a reason for introducing a foreign language into the curriculum.

The next discussion of 'Foreign languages and leisure occupations', brings forth a number of interesting points. Mr. Bobbitt holds, of course, that foreign language instruction is superfluous for occupational or for civic efficiency, and that it is merely one form of recreational opportunity. He makes, however, one great concession when he says: "Literature in the foreign-language often brings a tingling of new and eager interests that is less evident when the same literature is received through the routine grooves of vernacular habit"; p. 267. Still this end, viz., real reading of foreign literatures cannot in any degree, he thinks, justify forcing the language upon the unwilling. Yet who is forcing the foreign language upon the student? A survey of the flexible programs for graduation from high school, or even from college, would reveal a lack of such coercion.

The positive side of Mr. Bobbitt's dangerous linguistic-methodological contribution now follows, pp. 267-268: Since the dominant purpose in learning a foreign language seems to be that it shall function as a leisure occupation, or engender recreational habits, our teaching should be of the play or interest-driven type. We must give the pupils a start in the vocabulary, pronunciation (a sad hysteron proteron), fundamental forms, etc., to lead them up to attractive reading. There is no longer justification for that perverse practice on the part of language teachers of pouncing upon the hard spots, the unfamiliar words, the difficult and irregular grammatical forms and relationships. But how in the world can we with intellectual honesty really teach pronunciation, vocabulary, and fundamental forms so as to make them void of any difficulty or irregularity? The very genius of any foreign language is forsooth totally different from that of English. What Mr. Bobbitt means and says more than once is that much of the expenditure of money and time in the teaching of foreign languages at present is a wanton waste.

Again he needlessly pleads for optional study of languages; that is the case now in practically all of our high schools. The author predicts, however, that a considerable number of our pupils will pursue foreign languages as a recreational opportunity and experience, provided the reading plan is followed and no vexation of spirit is caused. The foreign language best suited to such leisure reading in high schools would be French. To persons interested in collecting specimens of pseudo-scientific procedure, we heartily recommend Mr. Bobbitt's account of how he ascertained, scientifically and objectively ascertained, the respective values for the student of today of the various modern languages. He counted the titles of the translations from foreign languages in Everyman's Library, and ranked the literatures of the world accordingly, for, as he sagaciously observes, since this collection is a commercial enterprise, it offers a basis for very definite conclusions. You cannot deceive a business man with any fine talk about literary values! He knows the real values and you have but to count the titles in Everyman's Library and see that he knows! According to these statistics, from the viewpoint of literary output, Greek, Russian, Latin or German would follow. P. 271.

The fifth question as to whether Foreign languages are needed for proficiency in English is, as expected, answered by the author in the negative. Latin, French, and Anglo-Saxon may have a slight value for spelling and for vocabulary-building. The writer goes so far as to say that one can study the etymology of English without studying Latin, French, or Anglo-Saxon. If study means serious investigation—which is its connotation etymologically—then we consider that statement more than specious. Incidentally, p. 276, we learn that Mr. Bobbitt has 'studied' Latin, but no Greek. This weakness betrays itself at times, as also the lack of a general foreign language preparation. We challenge the extravagant dictum that people who have not studied Greek appreciate the etymology of such words as *psychology*, *theology*, *pantheon*, *biography*, *biology*, *bibliography*, *philosophy*, *phonograph*, etc., about as completely as do people with training in Greek. This is absolutely impossible, for to the person with no Greek these terms are etymologically meaningless, whereas to the initiated each word is a compound of most clearly understood component factors.

Again the reviewer disagrees when Professor Bobbitt asserts that etymology does not reveal subtle differences of meaning in *servant*, *serf*, and *servitor*; or between *service* and *servitude*.

The last topic on 'Foreign languages needed for humanistic experience' is another attack upon the value of training in the classical languages. By implication, modern languages fare a trifle better.

In the concluding chapter, foreign languages are not even mentioned though by inference they may belong to 'reading for vision.'

'*The Curriculum*,' no doubt, is a real contribution to general educational theory, see, e.g., pp. 5-7. Unfortunately, Part VI, with its special treatise on foreign languages, offers little of constructive value though it contains many stimulating suggestions. Once more we utter this time-honored warning: *videant professores ne quid detrimenti capiant usus atque ratio linguarum*.

CARL A. KRAUSE.

New York

*LEYENDAS HISTORICAS MEXICANAS POR HERIBERTO FRIAS*. Edited with Vocabulary, Notes and Exercises by JAMES BARDIN. The Macmillan Co., 1919.

The text of the present volume will be of interest to students of folk-lore and history and of value to all who find in legends a basis for the interpretation of racial and national character. In a narrower sense it should be of especial interest to those who wish to gain a better understanding of Mexican history, character and life.

The book has called for an extraordinary amount of annotation, and the work has been very thoroughly done. A very definite policy in regard to introduction, notes, and vocabulary was evidently formulated in advance, and has been consistently followed throughout.

The text is preceded by a general historical introduction of some six pages. Each selection is provided with its own special prefatory note. Matters of religion, customs, biography, etc. are handled in footnotes. Full information as to the pronunciation of Aztec terms, and explanations of difficulties in grammar, or of an occasional divergence from Spanish usage, are given in the elaborate set of "Grammatical Notes" covering some twenty-seven pages. Suitable exercises are given at the close of each selection. The vocabulary lists common idioms which do not demand special comment and appears to be complete. Irregular verb forms are not listed, as this book is not intended for beginners.

The grammatical notes form the most striking feature of the editorial work. Hardly a difficulty has been overlooked, and some of us would say that much has been unnecessarily included. Explanations are very full and really explain. Idioms are translated literally as well as put into real English. A pupil having a reasonable knowledge of grammatical forms should be able to work out a lesson from this book without having to thumb a grammar or carry an extra book home, an item of prime importance in these days of multiple and exacting student activities.

It may be here remarked that under the direct method as ordinarily followed, pupils frequently do not get a thorough